

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Monitoring**

**District:** Maywood School District

**County:** Bergen

**Monitoring Dates:** December 16 and 17, 2003

**Monitoring Team:** Gladys Miller and Zola Mills

***Background Information:***

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Maywood School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Maywood School District with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
- The protection of procedural safeguards for students and their families;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and,
- The organization and delivery of programs and services resulting in positive student outcomes.

The self-assessment was designed to identify areas of strength, promising practices, areas that need improvement and areas that may be noncompliant with state and federal requirements. The Maywood School District developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan.

As the first step in the on-site monitoring process, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) held a focus group meeting for parents and community members at the Maywood Avenue School on December 9, 2003. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site visit, the NJDOE team reviewed district documents, including district policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers, related service personnel, and other relevant information, including a representative sample of student records. Interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, speech therapists and child study team members.

**District Strengths:**

The district provides computers and a variety of assistive technology programs such as FM systems, Touch Math, Orton Gillingham Language Tune UP program and the Sullivan reading program.

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Monitoring**

**Part One Data Summary:**

The data submitted by the district indicated that although the placement of preschool disabled students in general education settings is at the state average, the district has developed a plan to increase inclusion opportunities for pre-school disabled students. In addition, kindergarten through grade three special education students will have increased opportunities to be included in general education with the expansion of the districts in-class support program option. For students ages 6-21, the need to increase the percentage of students with disabilities in general education from between 40-80% of the day to more than 80% was noted. In the 2002-2003 school year, 29.1% were in the general education setting for more than 80%; 52.7% were in the general education setting between 40-80%; 8.8% were in general education for less than 40% and 9.4% were in separate settings. The district has developed an improvement plan to increase participation in general education.

The district was able to provide preliminary data regarding special education students who participated in the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment. In mathematics, 23.5% were proficient, and 76.5% were partially proficient. Language arts literacy scores were reported as 47.1% proficient with 52.9% being partially proficient. In science, 5.9% were advanced proficient, 52.9% were proficient and 41.2% were partially proficient. New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge scores of special education students indicated that proficiency in language arts literacy and proficiency in mathematics were at 14.3%. The district has developed a plan to increase the performance of all students with disabilities.

***Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:***

**Statewide Assessment** was determined to be an area of compliance by the district during self-assessment and by the Office of Special Education Programs during the on-site visit.

***Section I: General Provisions***

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of policies and procedures and dissemination of IDEA information.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of parent and professional development. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Monitoring**

**Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day and year, transfer students, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of extended school year, provision of related services including goals and objectives and hearing aid procedures. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has initiated activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section III: Procedural Safeguards**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of surrogate parents, consent, notices of meetings, written notice, notices in native language and interpreters at meetings, consideration of findings of independent evaluations and participation of parents at meetings for students eligible for speech language services. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has initiated activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of health summary and vision and hearing screenings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of Child Find, referral process, pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, and identification meeting participants and timelines. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Monitoring**

**Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of bilingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of multi-disciplinary evaluations, functional assessments and written reports. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. The district further identified concerns in the areas of standardized assessments and acceptance or rejection of reports. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section VI: Reevaluation**

**Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of timelines, planning meeting, participants at planning meetings and reevaluating pre-school students by June 30<sup>th</sup> of their last year in pre-school.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of documenting the decision to evaluate or not evaluate students. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of concern.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section VII: Eligibility**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of meetings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of participants, copy of evaluation reports to parents, signature of agreement or disagreement, documentation of eligibility, criteria, and screenings of students for speech. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Monitoring**

**Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of ninety day timelines, implementation dates, providing IEPs to parents, teacher knowledge and access, goals and objectives related to core curriculum content standards and annual review timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of meeting participants, considerations and required statements, present level of educational performance and meetings held prior to changes in services or programs. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of regular education access.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of individualized decision-making, considerations and documentation, supplementary aids and services and nonacademic participation. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas. The district further identified concerns in the area of continuum, specifically in the area of providing in-class support for kindergarten to grade three students. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of concern.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section X: Transition to Post-School**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of age fourteen transition service needs. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of concern.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Monitoring**

**Section XI: Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of procedural safeguards, manifestation determination and interim alternative educational setting.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of documentation to case manager, suspension tracking, behavior intervention plan and functional behavioral assessment. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section XIV: Programs and Services**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of age range waivers, class size waivers, group sizes for speech therapy and home instruction notification to county office.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of consultation time, providing special education students with specialized reading programs through general education, utilizing special education teachers for class coverage and providing substitute teachers for special education classes. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section XV: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of parent and adult student access to record, access sheets and maintenance and destruction of pupil records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of documentation of other locations and procedures for student records. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

# **New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring**

## **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Maywood School District on December 16 and 17, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the district's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the district's improvement plan. The district is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the district was able to identify all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process. As a result, many of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the district is commended for the many areas that were determined by the district and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

At a focus group meeting held prior to the monitoring visit, parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. Parents expressed an interest in learning more about secondary program opportunities for their children, specifically about vocational education opportunities. They also indicated that the district provides special education and related services in the least restrictive environment for pre-school through grade eight.

A review of district data indicated that the district is providing services to a significant number of students in the general education setting for more than 40% of the school day. The district has developed an improvement plan to increase the participation of students in general education for more than 80% of the day as well as increasing the performance of special education students on statewide assessments.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, dissemination of IDEA information, length of school day and year, transfer students, facilities, certifications, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, bilingual evaluations, reevaluation timelines, planning meeting, participants at planning meetings, reevaluation by June 30<sup>th</sup> of students' last year in pre-school, eligibility meetings, ninety day timelines, implementation dates, IEPs to parents, teacher knowledge and access, goals and objectives related to core curriculum content standards, annual review timelines, regular education access, pre-school transition, procedural safeguards, manifestation determination, interim alternative educational setting, all areas of statewide assessment, age range waivers, class size waivers, group sizes for speech language therapy, home instruction notification, parent and adult student access to records, access sheets and maintenance and destruction of records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding professional and parent training, extended school year, provision of related services including goals and objectives, hearing aid procedures, surrogate parents, consideration of findings of independent evaluations, parent participation at meetings for students eligible for speech language services, consent, notices of meetings, written notices, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings, Child Find, referral process, pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, identification meeting participants and timelines, multi-disciplinary and standardized assessments, functional assessments, written reports, acceptance or rejection of reports, documentation of the reevaluation decision to evaluate, eligibility meeting participants, criteria, statement of eligibility, signatures of

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Monitoring**

agreement or disagreement, copy of evaluation reports to parents, screening of students for speech, IEP meeting participants, IEP considerations and required statements, present levels of educational performance, program changes, least restrictive decision making process and documentation, consideration of supplemental aids and services, notification and participation of out of district students in nonacademic and extracurricular activities, continuum of programs, age fourteen transition service needs, documentation of discipline to case manager, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessment, behavior intervention plan, consultation time, providing special education students with specialized reading programs through general education, utilizing special education teachers for class coverage and providing substitute teachers for special education classes, documentation of other locations and student record procedures.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.